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SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY OF THE MAHABHARATA WAR

BY DR. DILEEP KUMAR KANJILAL*

Scientists and technologists bred in modern scientific principles of research are apt to debunk the idea of sophisticated weapons and mechanical warfare in the remote past in any part of the globe. But the ancient literature of India is full of such references which are really thought-provoking and lead a serious scholar to search for the correct interpretation of all such references. An unbiased reader will find in the descriptions of warfare in the Mahabharata many evidences of an advanced state of technology in some form. We find described weapons in appearance and use akin to modern tanks or armoured cars, missiles placed on multi-wheeled carriers, sound-interceptor missiles, ground-to-air and air-to-ground missiles, laser-beams and mass-destruction weapons similar to the modern nuclear bombs.

The Dronaparvan refers to a mechanical vehicle used by Ghatotkaca against Karna. This vehicle was made of some impregnable metal (steel or iron) and it moved on eight wheels. It was covered with the skin of black deer and had so much space inside as to hide a person. It produced a loud roar while it moved and it struck terror in the hearts of the enemy soldiers. The vehicle required at least 400 feet to maneuver and moved without the help of horses or elephants. Here, however, the readings differ somewhat. The Gita Press Edition of the Mahabharata reads that the vehicle was automatic and could travel more than 30 nalvas, that is 12,000 feet, at a stretch, but the reading of the Brandarkar Oriental Research Institute Standard Edition suggests that the vehicle was run by mighty elephants and horses "who fed on blood and flesh." and that it travelled one nalva (400 feet) at a stretch. Correlated with the descriptions of other weapons, the description of the vehicle as "automatic" as given in the Gita Press Edition seems more relevant. From the description one can equate the vehicle with the armoured tank which first made its appearance in World War I and decided the fate of the battle. Ghatotkaca alone could have brought victory to the Pandavas had not Karna used the Ekaghni weapon against him.

The Vanaparvan refers to two types of missiles; one ground-to-air and air-to-ground which emitted light and moved in a writhing, snake-like, zig-zag manner, and the other a ground-to-ground or ground-to-air missile which followed the track of a sound. The demon-king, Salva, used a flying machine known as Saubhapura in his fight with Krsna. As Salva was dropping "splinters" from above, Krsna dispelled them with a missile (Salya) from below. A furious Salva then engulfed Krsna with more piercing splinters and sharp "nails" and Krsna, who was standing on the ground below, went into a swoon. But he soon recovered and sent fiery missiles which moved snake-like in a zig-zag manner through the air to the flying vehicle which instantly disappeared. In the meantime the demons who were assembled on the ground began to attack Krsna, who was lying concealed in darkness. Taking advantage of the sound made by the demons, an undaunted Krsna launched sound-sensing missiles against the demons and destroyed them all.

The Mahabharata frequently refers to a weapon by the name of Sataghni, which was capable of killing a hundred persons at a time. Modern lexicons describe the weapon as a huge boulder studded with iron nails. This was usually placed at the top of fort walls and was thrown at the army attempting to scale the walls. According to the Dronaparvan, it was placed on carriers fixed with wheels and was carried to the battlefield. This was thrown at the enemy with the help of mechanical contrivances or by igniting fire. Ignition and sound seem to equate it with the cannon ball of today's time.

The epic Mahabharata also refers to a class of weapons by the name of "asani." Different from the thunderbolt of Indra, the asani was a projectile which was carried on an eight-wheel vehicle to a particular site and then launched towards its target causing fire when it hit.

The Udyogaparvan refers to three classes of weapons. The first one was known as "prasvapana", which was capable of inducing sleep among the enemy soldiers. The second class, known as "prabodha" was apt to awake them from slumber. The third was the mighty Brahmastra, which burned everything instantly, caused stormy winds and clouds, generated intense heat and threatened annihilation of the whole world. The best use of the prasvapana weapon was made by Arjuna when he set the entire army of the Kauravas into a deep sleep. In the fight between Rama and Ravana, this weapon was used. The fierce battle between Bhisma and Parasurama, mentioned in the Udyogaparvan, evinces apart from the uses of the prasvapana and the prabodha, the most powerful Brahmastra. On the advice of the Gods and the sages, Bhisma withdrew

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this horrible weapon.

The 18 day long Bharata war was not confined to daytime alone. It continued during the night and to maintain clear visibility on the battlefield, some sort of artificial lighting was used.The Dronaparvan describes the use of innumerable lamps. Seven lamps were placed on each elephant and ten lamps on each chariot. The text goes further to state that lighted lamps were thrown into the sky to maintain visibility. The reference is intriguing. Probably it suggests that rockets with stationary lamps were shot into the sky. The Bhismaparvan mentions a firewand as a means of lighting. Sticks smeared with sulphur were placed at various places and when ignited these served the purpose of lighting. The Dronaparvan further refers to the creation of a blinding darkness which Sakuni used to engulf Arjuna. Arjuna dispelled this darkness by creating artificial light with his weapon. There was thus a time in the remote past when military personnel were aware of some means of creating darkness as well as creating light to outwit the enemy on the battlefield.

The whole of the Dronaparvan of the Mahabharata is full of references to mighty weapons capable of global destruction. The Vanaparvan deals with Arjuna's securing of the Pasupata weapon whose potentiality could destroy the whole world. Arjuna was strictly forbidden to use this weapon at any time on human beings. Apart from the Pasupata weapon, the catastrophic effects of the use of the Narayana weapon has been mentioned in the Dronaparvan. The same context simultaneously refers to the use of a horrible fiery weapon (agneya) intended for total destruction by a revengeful Asvatthama on Arjuna, but rendered it ineffective by countering with the more powerful Brahmastra. But Arjuna was again advised by the Gods and the sages not to use it on human beings. When used, this weapon instantly killed all life at the epicentre. The heat generated was equivalent to 100 times solar power. The sky was filled with dust and strong gusty winds. Trees were incinerated. The sound caused people at afar to tremble with fear.

The evil effect of the use of such lethal weapons has been vividly described in the Udyogaparvan in the fight between Naranaryana and Dambhodbhava. Soldiers coming under the spell of the mighty Isika weapon used by Naranaryana turned totally blind. They became deaf and dumb. Their olfactory tract was so affected that they lost the power of smell. Burns appeared all over their bodies and the entire battery was put out of action. The sky appeared to be smeared with white dust. The after effects of the use of such fearful weapons reminds us of the radioactive effects of laser and thermo-nuclear weapons in modern warfare.

The Adiparvan mentions a weapon called Kanapa which seems to be a short-range firearm used from close range on the enemy. Etymologically the word means a weapon "which feeds on heated iron balls." The Dasakumaracarita, a prose work of the 7th Century AD, refers to this weapon as one that emits fire.

One more astonishing specimen among the weaponry mentioned in the Mahabharata is the Tvastra weapon. This ingenious weapon caused the image of the one using the weapon to be mirrored on the faces of the enemy soldiers. When Arjuna used this weapon on his enemy they began fighting among themselves because each one looked to the other like Arjuna! It might have been an optical illusion produced through some sort of electronic device or by electro-magnetic waves. Until now, modern science has been unable to produce a weapon like this one.

Some other weapons used in the epic Mahabharata war can be classified as atmospheric. Thus, the "paryana" weapon created clouds in the atmosphere which caused profuse rain on the enemy, sending them into utter confusion. This rain was dispelled by the use of a counter weapon called the "vayavya" which exerted a violent pressure on the wind, dispersing the clouds, as well as causing devastation and havoc among the enemy.

Flooding of the battlefield by extracting the subsoil water was caused by another class of weapon. The Udyogaparvan, the Sabhaparvan and the Bhismaparvan are replete with references to these environmental warfare weapons. Scientists today are apprehensive about the disastrous effects on the ecological balance, which the use of such environmental weapons can cause.

The most convincing evidence of the use of powerful lethal weapons is to be met with in the Sauptikaparvan, when Asvatthama was caught by the Pandavas. Finding no way of escape, Asvatthama rashly discharged the dangerous Brahmasir weapon which alone was capable of destroying the world. To counteract this weapon, Arjuna employed the Brahmastra in the proper manner. The meeting of the two mighty forces created a tremendous fireball in the firmament which threatened world destruction. Thousands of meteorites began to pour in. Loud roar filled the sky and sudden sparks of lightning appeared. Everything was about to be incinerated. The world shook with fear. On the earnest appeal of the sages Arjuna withdrew his weapon but Asvatthama could not. He became repentant and afraid that the weapon would rebound on him. So Lord Krsna intervened to neutralize the weapon. It was contained but its effects were felt on the pregnant wives of the surviving Pandava warriors who gave birth to still-born, deformed and malformed babies. Birth of physically handicapped, still-born and deformed babies from radioactive effects among the survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear holocausts are too well known to be further expanded here.

The veracity of modern historians who credit China with the discovery of gunpowder in the 9th Century AD and tell us that the Moghul Emperor Babur first used gunpowder in India in the 11th Century AD, must certainly be questioned. Real history goes much deeper into the past and requires retelling. The Manusamhita, which can be placed before 200 AD, refers to the use of incendiary powder. Kautilya too, in the 2nd Century BC refers to incendiary powder, inflamable oil floating on water, mineral oil, various sources of power, and strange mechanical contrivances, including mechanical robots. The Udyogaparvan refers to incendiary oil for lighting fire and powder for producing fire. According to the Adiparvan, the venerable sage Brhaspati transmitted the science of the use of firearms to Bharadwaja, the composer of the Vaimanikasastra, who taught the science to Agnivesya who taught it to Drona. From Drona, Arjuna came by the science of the use of firearms. The Nagarayantrasutra, a treatise on mechanical contrivances for the urban people, is one of the many highly scientific treatises mentioned in the Mahabharata. So the tradition of a well-developed technology suited to that time was current among the people of old South-Eastern Asia before the Mahabharata war, which took place in 3127 BC (according to the Aihole Inscription of the 7th Century AD), and about 1500 BC (according to modern scholars).The enormity of the catastrophe was unthinkable. It took quite a long time for the old Indians to contain the shock and for life to return to normalcy. From about 1500 BC until 500 BC (the time of the birth of Lord Buddha) no literary or historical record can be found. Survivors of that war evince little interest in the manufacture and use of lethal weapons or in armament. A real dark age had descended upon the land. The military tradition and the use of mechanical weapons gradually went into oblivion. Only the fearful memory of a bloody battle survived through legends.

History must now be told in its proper perspective through the modern translation and interpretation of the ancient texts to admit the truth of a catastrophic battle among mankind which almost destroyed the world in a remote past age.

THE MALTESE CROSS

BY MAURICE CHATELAIN*

Ethnologists consider the Aegean Sea, between Greece, the island of Crete, and Turkey to be the cradle of our Western civilization that started 4,000 years ago as the Cretan and Mycenaean cultures. Everybody knows that. But few are aware that 5,000 years before Crete and Mycenae prospered, civilized people lived in small villages and towns of Anatolia, which were famous before Troy was built. The tools and weapons of these people were made of obsidian, a black volcanic glass that they also polished into mirrors. Cattle were raised and cereals grown there 9,000 years ago.

How could the inhabitants of this region become civilized so early?We can find the answer if we are willing to accept the discovery that these early humans used even more surprising knowledge than animal husbandry and agriculture, namely, astronomy and mathematics.

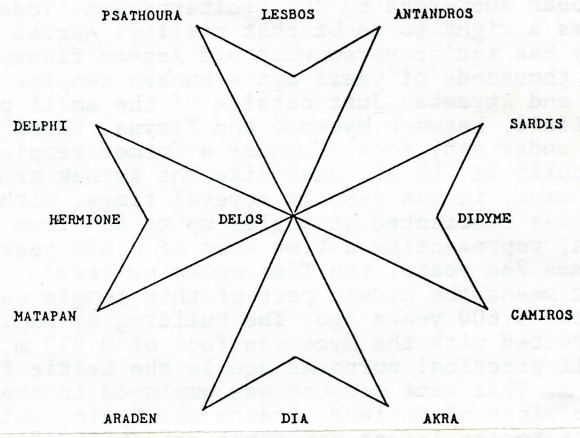
In the center of the Aegean Sea exists a small island by the name of Delos. It has always been considered the most sacred place of ancient Greece, even though no one seemed to know why,of all places, Delos should be so sacred. It was simply an accepted belief apparently carried over from a past unknown. To me it seems there can be only one logical explanation for this belief. Delos is the geometric center of a true design of the gods - the Maltese cross of majestic proportions that extends over hundreds of miles over the Aegean Sea, Greece and Turkey.

To show that this gigantic geometric figure is not the figment of imagination and no science-fiction invention, please follow me in tracing this cross with a compass and a straight-edge over a good map of the Aegean Sea. Let's put the sharp point of one compass arm in the middle of Delos and measure a radius of 1,500 ancient Egyptian stadia, or 270 km, and run the trace arm of the compass full circle. We will have passed in succession through Cape Matapan and Delphi in Greece; the island of Psathura in the Northern Sporades; Antandrus and Sardis in Anatolia; Camirus on Rhodes; and Akra and Araden on Crete.

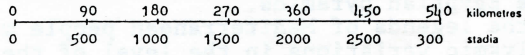
Now let's trace a small circle with Delos still in the center. A radius of 1,000 Egyptian stadia, or 180 km, will give a ring that connects Hermione in Greece; a high bank between the islands of Lesbos and Skyros; Didyma in Anatolia; and a point now submerged north of the Dia Island. Thus, if we include Delos, we have thirteen geographic sites that have always been sacred places marked by temple ruins constructed over even more ancient ruins from time immemorial. Thirteen has always been a magic number for astrological reasons. All of the places that we have found tracing the circles around Delos are not on firm land; but we must remember that in the past, the Mediterranean had a much lower water level. At any rate, these sites were not chosen by chance, as our next step of tracing on the map will prove.

When we connect all of the sites with straight lines going from point to point in the following order: Delos, Matapan, Hermione, Delphi, Delos, Psathoura, Lesbos, Anatandros, Delos, Sardis, Didyme, Camiros, Delos, Akra, Dia, Araden and Delos, we have drawn a magnificent geometrical figure known as the "Maltese cross," a sacred pagan sign since antiquity as well as the sign of the Crusaders who fought to liberate Jerusalem from the Infidels. Indeed, the designs of the Lord are beyond human comprehension!

What interests us now is how and why such a gigantic pattern was marked on the Aegean and surrounding lands. I do not believe that even today's land surveyors could so precisely mark such a gigantic figure of over 335 miles jumping from island to island and stretching over sea and mountains. Except from high up in the air, this Maltese cross would not be visible. To measure and mark all of the salient points, two very modern tools of mapping are an absolute necessity. First, a synchronous satellite orbiting at the Delos latitude of 37° 23' with a space velocity of 1,328 kmph. Then, to keep that satellite stationary over Delos, one of our newest devices that was perfected only a short time ago - a navigation and distance-measuring airborne radar with metallic reflectors installed at distances of 180 and 270 km around the two circles.



The Maltese cross of the Aegean Sea



The Maltese cross of the Aegean must have been constructed by just such means or with other much better devices still unknown to mankind. The ancient Greeks did not know about its existence; and they had no knowledge of astronomy or geometry until the Egyptians gave them the basics of these sciences.To find out for what purpose and to whose benefit this geometrical marking was set up, we have to continue our logical deductions and look back many, many thousands of years.

The geometric figures of Nazca in Peru that have been described in dozens of books are not so unique. Straight lines, triangles, and trapezoids have been discovered by aerial photography in many other places around the world. These designs cannot be recognized while your feet are on the ground. Some, like the Maltese cross of the Aegean Sea,can be perceived only on good maps.And all of these baffling markings have one thing in common - they have been measured and laid out in stadia of 600 ft., or 180 m,the same as in Mayan and Egyptian measurements. These stadia and the feet and cubits that were derived from them are the very oldest prehistoric standards of measurement.

The Maltese cross presents a very curious characteristic. When the eight outer points are set on a circle, the eight radii divide it in sections of 3/28 and 4/28 of the circle. That could have been just a whim of the creators of this geometric figure but a closer look reveals some hidden meaning. In ancient cultures, the circle has been divided into 5, 6 and 7 parts, in 8, 12 and 360 sectors.The Arabs seem to have used 11 and 44 parts, but as far as we know no one in classical antiquity divided a circle into 28 sectors.

However, if we cross the Atlantic and go to the Mayas, Incas, or even the Wyoming Indians, we find this division. The Medicine Wheel of Wyoming was divided into 28 equal parts, and the temple of Tiahuanaco in Bolivia was divided into 28 sectors by 29 columns. Also the cubit of Cuenca, in Ecuador, has 7 hands of 4 fingers each, or a total of 28 fingers; because the gods of that time had ony 4 fingers on each hand as many sculptures and drawings show it. Twice twenty-eight is 56, and such is the number of hieroglyphs on the solid gold plate of Cuenca. Note also that megalithic Stonehenge, in Wiltshire, England, has 56 Aubrey holes. In the classical antique world only the royal cubit of the Egyptians was di-

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visible into 7 hands of 4 fingers each, and that brings us to the possible conclusion that the Egyptians,as well as the creators of Stonehenge and the Maltese cross, had a connection or a common origin with the civilizations of Cuenca, Tiahuanaco and Wyoming.

There are ancient Greek temples and cities that have been submerged by the Mediterranean. Today no one has a right to doubt that reality. Aerial photography has rediscovered what old Aegean fishermen found thousands of years ago - sunken temples, villages and streets. Just outside of the small port of Halieis, between Mycenae and Tiryns, there reposes under many feet of water a former temple of Zeus built in 780 BC. Just like the Karnak temple near Luxor, it was rebuilt several times, with new additions reoriented at angles up to 40° from the origin, representing a time span of 2,880 years, or 10 times 288 years, the Tiahuanaco number.

That means the oldest part of this temple was constructed 5,600 years ago. The building at Halieis is constructed with the Mycenean foot of 0.277 m, which for all practical purposes equals the Celtic foot of 0.276 m. This same measure was employed in the megalithic sites of England, France and Spain, which according to the latest estimates date back 10,000 years or more, preceding the ziggurats of Mesopotamia and the Egyptian pyramids.

All of the legends of Mediterranean people mention the cataclysmic variations in the level of the sea and the eruption of a volcano on the island of Thera in 1521 BC, or 3,500 years ago. The eruption and the following tidal waves destroyed the Minoan civilization. Many islands around Crete disappeared under water and the bottom of the sea caved in. The conquest of the Aegean Islands by Mycenaeans from Greece followed. But before this catastrophe, about 12,000 years ago, there was the really big one - the flooding of the Gibraltar Strait by the Atlantic Ocean, and the sudden rise of the Mediterranean Sea level by at least 200 m, or 600 ft.

Modern calculations have been made to see what would happen to the Mediterranean if the Strait of Gibraltar were dammed up. All of the rivers that bring fresh water to the Mediterranean could not equal the volume of water evaporated by the heat of the Sun. The sea level would descend rather rapidly, reducing the evaporation area and finally settling at a point of equilibrium where the water flowing in from the rivers would equal the amount evaporating. This new level would be about 600 ft below the present level. The past would return. The islands of the Aegean Sea would be much larger and all thirteen points of the Maltese cross would be visible.

When the isthmus of Gibraltar gave way to the pressure of the Atlantic,because some cosmic event caused the northern polar ice cap to melt and raised the level of the oceans, all of the coastal lines of Greece and its islands were submerged. Whole civilizations disappeared. A few ignorant shepherds high in the mountains survived and carried over to future generations legends of this deluge.

But all was not lost. The arid mountains were now closer to the sea and the climate changed.With more frequent rains, agriculture prospered and domestic animals grew fatter. This may well have been the time of Paradise on Earth,as the Hebrew legends recall it. It may have been the period chosen by the Bible as the starting point for the cultural evolution of man by simply ignoring all previous civilizations. Most certainly what the Bible calls the Garden of Eden is the golden age of Mediterranean legend.

Legends are usually not simply inventions.Most of them are based on historical facts, precisely dated, sometimes in very esoteric terms. The legend of Hercules, the strong and brave Greek hero who won immortality by performing the twelve heroic labours demanded by Hera, is a good example.In this tale of antiquity, we find the lion of Nemea, the hydra of Lerna,the pillars of Hercules,and the bull of Crete. Translating these into the signs of the zodiac, we have Leo, Cancer, Gemini, and Taurus.For the astrologers of the Mediterranean basin, the cycle of precession of the equinoxes,a revolution of the Earth's axis around the pole of the ecliptic, was 25,920 years divided into twelve periods of 2,160 years each.

Until our modern astrologers finally agree where we are at the present time on the zodiac, we can assume that the era of the Fishes started on March 21 in the first year after Christ. In that case, the zodiacal era of Leo started in 10,800 BC; that of Cancer in 8,640 BC; that of Gemini in 6,480 BC; that of Taurus in 4,320 BC; and that of Aries (or the Golden Fleece) in 2,160 BC, ending at the start of the present era of Pisces. Consequently, we can assume that the Hercules legends indicate that the collapse of the land between the promontories at Ceuta in Africa and Gibraltar in Europe happened about 12,000 years ago, and that it took nearly 6,000 years for the flooding waters to settle at the present level.

*This article is excerpted from Mr. Chatelain's book Our Ancestors Came from Outer Space, first published in French by Editions Robert Laffont, S.A, then in English in hardcover by Doubleday & Company, and in paperback by Dell Publishing Co. The book has been republished in 1988 in oversize paperback under the title Our Cosmic Ancestors, with a foreword by Charles Berlitz and a new chapter on the UFO phenomenon. It is available from Temple Golden Publications, P.O.Box 10501, Sedona, Arizona 86336 USA.

Born in Paris, France in 1908, Mr. Chatelain emigrated to the United States and began a career in the aerospace industry in California, where he became a specialist in telecommunications, telemetry, radar and electronic navigation. Mr. Chatelain was placed in charge of the design, development and production of the space communication systems for voice and television transmission for the spacecraft for NASA's Apollo moon missions. Now retired, Mr. Chatelain lives at 3976 Kenosha Avenue, San Diego, Californa 92117 USA.

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FOR MORE on the flooding of the Mediterranean basin and the megalithic structures on the island of Malta, see Malta's Prediluvian Culture, by Joseph S. Ellul. The book is available from the author at Hagar Qim House, 58, St. Catherine Str., Zurrieq, MALTA, Europe. The price is US$6, which includes postage.

CORRECTION: In my article on "Pyramid Thoughts" in Ancient Skies 15:6, the time of the reign of the Pharaoh Surid is incorrectly stated as 1,490 BC. The sentence should read: "When I was in Egypt, a Coptic priest told me the Masoudi story of the Pharaoh Surid (circa 10,490 BC)." The date 10,490 BC puts Surid at 490 years before the Deluge which is widely thought to have occurred at circa 10,000 BC. Edwin Briton, c/o P.O. Kilcoy, Queensland 4515, AUSTRALIA.

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